

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

June 7, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
Secretary
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

I write to request a 90 day extension to the public comment period regarding EPA's second five year review of the Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site. The report is more than 1000 pages, and includes detailed technical data and assessments. Its findings have ramifications for stakeholders along a 200-mile stretch of the Hudson River from Hudson Falls, New York to New York City. Therefore, I do not believe that EPA's 30 day comment period is sufficient. It is vital that local residents, community and environmental organizations, business leaders, state and federal agencies, as well as the Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees, and representatives from the Community Advisory Group have the opportunity to review and evaluate the results and make their voices heard.

The five year review presents an opportunity to realize goals that you have articulated, including the importance of cleaning up the Hudson River pollution, ensuring the Superfund program succeeds in achieving both environmental outcomes and creating jobs. When EPA announced the Hudson River cleanup 15 years ago, it was a promise to New Yorkers that the long-damaged river would finally be on the path to a rapid recovery. However, after the cleanup plan was established, EPA discovered that at least 2-3 times more PCB contamination existed in Hudson River sediments than had been assumed; yet EPA did not modify the scope of the cleanup. As a result, the Hudson River remains contaminated at levels far beyond the cleanup targets EPA established. Economic development on the Upper Hudson River has long been stifled by the dark cloud of toxic pollution; communities cannot wait decades longer for a clean and usable river. Long-term "natural attenuation" of PCBs is not a solution to this problem. The PCBs in the Upper Hudson River are continuing to be transported down-river as far as New York Harbor and beyond. PCB levels in fish in the lower Hudson River are not declining as expected, pointing to the need for investigation of downriver contamination and appropriate remedial action.

New York State has a long and proud history of environmental protection in conjunction with economic development, and the Hudson River is a national symbol as an American Heritage River. New Yorkers live, work and play along the Hudson River. I strongly believe that additional cleanup is needed. A credible five year review is crucial to ensure the integrity of the federal Superfund program, given that the Hudson is one of the largest and most visible sites in the country.

It is essential that those who are most directly impacted have a sufficient opportunity to review and respond to the EPA report. I urge you to extend the public comment period for this important purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten Gillibrand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator